Hampstead. 24th March 1822.

Dear Richards,

Your kind offer to take charge of my child gave me no more than a sincere feeling of thankfulness till within the last week. Whether I accept it or not, is yet undetermined; and do you and Mrs Richards reflect upon it more deeply than perhaps you have done hitherto, before you clench the offer. Nothing is on my mind against leaving him with you except the losing of his company, and I am unwilling to be quite solitary when abroad. At all events I shall look forward to having him in Italy in the space of three or four years; - either sent with some family, or carried thither by myself. It is almost entirely on account of the child that I waver in my determination to take him with me now; for it appears to me it will be more advantageous for him to be with you, and your children, than with me alone, - tho', had any other person said so, I should have denied it, having so good an opinion of my own governorship. Without a compliment I say you and your wife are the only couple to whom I would intrust him. Let him be like Tom and I am satisfied. As for the expences, we must agree about that

as we can, taking care that you are fully covered, – in this I cannot conceive a hindrance. I will mention what, I think, are the chief objections against your taking him. 1st Abby; – she may annoy you; she was here a few days since, and rather entreated I would take him abroad. I told her I either should do so, or leave him with your family. She willingly agreed to the alternative, but still preferred his being under my own controul and management. To all this, I confess, she astonishes me. Her idea is to advertise for a place abroad and follow me; this I explained was stark folly. We must, as far as possible, tie down her consent, – perhaps by a witness to her agreement with you and me, before I go, but without letting her know our purpose, for that would answer no ~~purpose~~ end with one so ignorant, and to let her know our purpose can do him neither a kindness nor a good, nor the concealment an injury. 2nd Your feeling of responsibility. On that score you may be quite at ease. If I hear of his death, the news would not be mixed with any painful reflections against yourself, even without a word of explanation on your

part. If, on my return, I find him with a wooden leg, or blind, or on crutches, or in any other awful situation, arising from the accidents of this life, I should look upon the misfortune as accident and no more, even if you accused yourself of wilful carelessness. 3d. Objection;- the extreme trouble in rearing a child, whom you are to lose at a certain period, unless I myself die, & then you & Dilke may settle him as you please. His temper & dispositions are, I suppose, bad or good, according to the folks about him. I have already made him tolerably ~~good-tempered~~, merely by talking, and behaving with firmness. After you left us I saw two apologies in his mouth for his fretfulness; for, on the day you were here, he had cut his eye teeth. But to talk to you about so young a child's conduct is superfluous, - it will rest with yourself, and you know it. The remaining objections I leave to you and Mrs R. You will see I have written this letter in a very grave mood, for it is with me a weighty consideration. To lose him for 3 or 4 years is no trifle, especially while I am away from all my old friends.

think of it, and write me word, and by that time I may have set my seal on my resolve, one way or the other. ~~It~~ You must know from what I said to you a fortnight ago, it never was my intention to leave the child with Mrs. Dilke, and she knew it. I must now end my letter, with Compts to your wife.

Yours most truly,
Chas. Brown.

Mr Charles Mill